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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Bosnian Serbs release all remaining United Nations hostages; UNPROFOR withdraws peace-keepers from weapons collection points after intense fighting in and around Sarajevo.

* Secretary-General welcomes communique issued following Group of Seven Summit in Halifax; notes support for United Nations role as unique forum for building consensus on global priorities.

* UNFICYP plays indispensable role in preventing recurrence of fighting in Cyprus, Secretary-General tells Security Council; mandate should be extended to 31 December.

* Secretary-General expresses concern at recent escalation of hostilities along Israel-Lebanon border; urges all parties to exercise restraint.

* Utility supplies should be restored in Sarajevo this week following agreement between Bosnian parties, Special Coordinator announces.

* Security Council welcomes recent positive developments in Angola, but notes some delays in peace process; stresses need for progress in mine clearance.

* Secretary-General pledges to make problems of African children a priority for United Nations action; calls on international community to redouble support for UNICEF.

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The Bosnian Serbs have freed the last 26 of the United Nations personnel held hostage by them for three weeks, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The 11 Canadian peace-keepers and 15 military observers arrived

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today at Zagreb airport, where they were greeted by United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) Commander General Bernard Janvier and Special Representative Yasushi Akashi.

There was intense fighting in and around Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the weekend, the spokesman said. However, only moderate levels of activity were reported today. United Nations troops were withdrawn from the heavy weapons collection points around the capital city yesterday. Half of the collection points had already been overrun by the Bosnian Serbs. The remaining peace-keepers had been unable to function properly and had become vulnerable to hostage-taking. The decision to withdraw was fully supported by troop-contributing countries.

The spokesman noted that United Nations peace-keepers remained deployed at certain key observation posts. They could still play a useful role, primarily by being inter-positioned between the opposing forces around Sarajevo and the eastern enclaves.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the communique issued by the Heads of State and Government of the "Group of Seven" industrialized countries and the President of the European Commission following their Summit in Halifax, Canada. He said he greatly appreciated the support expressed for the role of the United Nations as a "unique forum for consensus building on global priorities", as an "advocate for core values" and as an agent to respond to development and humanitarian needs.

The Secretary-General welcomed the suggestions made in the communique for further enhancing the effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations system in the economic, social and environmental fields and in the humanitarian area. He said he would examine them carefully with all concerned. He also appreciated the call on Member States to meet their financial obligations to the Organization and for early agreement on reform of the system of assessment.

Finally, he welcomed the commitment to help the United Nations system face the challenges of the next century. The Summit participants said they would seek a consensus on that issue in October, when Heads of States and Government gathered in New York for the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) until 31 December, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 15 June, he said UNFICYP's presence on the island remained indispensable to achieving the objectives set out by the Council. The Force was established to prevent a recurrence of fighting in Cyprus and to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions. In the past six months, he continued, the Force had carried out its functions effectively, with a reasonable degree of cooperation from both Cypriot parties, and the situation had remained generally calm.

However, the report pointed out that there was merely a cease-fire in Cyprus, not peace. The status quo held dangers that did not diminish with the passage of time. In the absence of progress towards an agreed overall settlement, the situation remained subject to sudden tensions, generated by events outside the island as well as within. Furthermore, the excessive levels of armaments and forces in Cyprus, and the rate at which they were being strengthened, were a cause for serious concern. There had been no progress even on modest measures aimed at reducing confrontation between the parties along the cease-fire lines.

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The Secretary-General has expressed deep concern at the recent escalation of hostilities along the border between Israel and Lebanon, and the resulting civilian casualties. In a statement issued on Friday, he urged all parties to exercise restraint and, in particular, to refrain from attacking civilians.

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The Special Coordinator for Sarajevo, William Eagleton, today announced that utilities would probably be restored to the city later this week. He told correspondents at Headquarters that the Bosnian parties had reached an agreement on gas, electricity and water supplies, and that the modalities for restoration were now being discussed. The Bosnian Serbs cut off the city's utilities almost a month ago.

Mr. Eagleton expressed optimism regarding international efforts on behalf of Sarajevo, despite recent events there. At a conference in Vienna on 14 June, donors had not only pledged to continue to support the Action Plan

for the city, but had indicated that they would make additional contributions to it. To date, 28 countries had pledged a total of $95 million, while $11 million had been paid into the Trust Fund for Sarajevo.

Some 300 projects were currently being planned for the Bosnian capital, and funding had been received for half of them, he continued. As soon as conditions permitted, efforts would be made to improve the utility situation. He stressed the need for secure access to the city, noting that economic activity there had flourished when roads were open earlier this year.

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The Security Council has welcomed recent positive developments in Angola, including the maintenance of the cease-fire. However, in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 15 June, it noted that despite the considerable progress in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, there had been delays in the peace process. The Council made those comments in response to the fourth progress report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

The Council expressed particular concern at the lack of progress in mine clearance, which affected the deployment of UNAVEM III and the Angolan people's ability to return to their homes. It endorsed the Secretary-General's call to the parties to reinforce recent actions in the fields of mine clearance and road and bridge repair. The Council expressed its distress at the recent killing of a United Nations police observer in Angola, and the wounding of a military observer. It recalled the responsibility of the parties for the safety and security of all United Nations personnel there.

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The Secretary-General has pledged to make African problems, and particularly the problems of African children, his priority for United Nations action. He made that pledge on Friday, in an address to the gala event at Headquarters marking the Day of the African Child. He called on the international community to redouble its support for the United Nations and for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The challenge was complex and required a comprehensive response, including carefully targeted measures to assist children, he continued. Cooperation for development must be designed with children in mind, and children harmed by conflict must benefit the most from United Nations work for peace. "Our message to the world today is: Africa is not alone. The children of Africa are not alone," he concluded.

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